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XIII.—SCHOLARSHIP AND THE COMMONWEALTH.[1]

We may surely congratulate ourselves, not alone as scholars, but also as citizens, that the Modern Language Association of America has united in harmonious and effective co-operation a large majority of the real leaders in important fields of study. Our Association is a *representative* body in the fullest sense of the word; its members show a growing interest in each other's work, and in the progress of science as a whole. The total results seem almost too good to be true: who could have prophesied to Professor Marshall Elliott, during the years in which he was laboring for a truly national organization, that the somewhat overworked and overburdened citizens of this department of the Republic of Letters would so generally be ready to pay their three dollars yearly; that a goodly number would be found to bring their costly contributions to the scientific treasury of the Society, and to gather from long distances for its yearly conference, at a heavy tax in time and money—and all this at a time when anthracite coal is selling at $7.35 a ton, not put in! There is a high idealism back of this, which promises much for American civilization. If modern history teaches anything, it is the lesson of the great effectiveness of the trust-idea; the most sordid evils which affect society and our own profession are those which come from ruthless, cynical, destructive competition, that survival of the brutish age when each individual stood for himself, and against all comers. Every principle of economic administration calls for a centralization of directive responsibility in the most competent hands. The entire manufacturing industries of our country have been practically put into the control of corporations, which have ended competition

[1] An address delivered by Professor James Taft Hatfield, as President of the Central Division of the Association, at Champaign, Ill., on the 26th of December, 1901.

among themselves: are the children of this world so much wiser, then, in their generation, than the children of light? Shall we be unable to use what the biscuit-makers, the tanners of hides, the coal-barons, and the brokers in political power employ with conspicuous success for the most sordid purposes? Such a union is the only means of preventing waste and incompetency, of restraining clumsy hands from a fatal interference with higher values; it is the best security against that familiar tragedy of American life:—the planting, with faith and courage, of a fair garden, the development of it into beauty by patient labor, only that it shall lapse into a wilderness by mere neglect. If American life be incapable of something better than a direct pursuit of the immediate ends of interested persons, we must become once for all pessimists as to the basal theory of a free and intelligent Democracy—which God forbid! Our salvation from the vulgarity which has all but overwhelmed our political institutions, which makes itself distressingly broad in society, in the church, and in much of the intellectual æsthetic life of our people, lies in a true Aristocracy, an aristocracy anointed with the full drop of democratic oil, absolutely open without prejudice to all who have proven themselves fit to become leaders—and to none others under any plea; an aristocracy constantly rejuvenated by vigorous, daring young blood. The Modern Language Association is a living proof of the entire practicability of such a power in American life: we must not forget that the whole problem is, first of all, a civic, rather than an academic one. Whether there be really a "Monastic Danger in Higher American Education" or not, we dare not ignore the fact that education is a preparation for *life*. Some of us count it a positive loss to America's cultural development that during the last century our country broke so many of the ties which had bound us organically to English civilization and English educational ideals,—in favor of an attempt to recast our system upon more theoretical grounds. As Mr. Courthope recently pointed out, the invigorating and elevating

influence of Oxford and Cambridge upon the English nation has been due in large measure to the fact that they have stood in vital relations to the civic life of the British Empire: that their education has been so largely the Aristotelian πολιτικὴ παιδεία,—an education which has inculcated high-minded traditions that forever render impossible such base prostitution of sacred public trusts as makes the one indelible stain upon contemporary American politics. That supremely typical American, James Russell Lowell, whom our national Association had the proud honor of claiming as a most loyal President, was also the supreme example of an American scholar, a man who was the flower of American culture, and who learned at the very beginning of his career the same great conclusion which Goethe came to after the unexampled strivings of his strenuous life, that the æsthetic ideal is to be postponed to the practical one; that the welfare of society is not to be gained by detached speculation, but by the loftiest thought transmuted into labor and accomplishment. Equally praiseworthy have been the valuable public services of such academic Americans as Presidents Angell, Gilman, and Schurman; of Dean Worcester and Professor Phelps, not to dwell upon the tireless efforts of Dr. Elgin Gould in his heroic campaign for the social and political reform of the American metropolis. The sway of the gods of the market-place is bad and bitter enough, as every idealist knows, but yet there are not wanting many tokens of hope and encouragement. How reassuring was the recent clean victory of President Seth Low over coarseness and greed, and how much it means for the cause for which we are all working that there now stands at the head of the nation a man who represents, in unsullied purity, the very ideals to which we have devoted our lives:—an aristocrat of the aristocrats, to whom meanness and vulgarity are constitutionally alien and repulsive! Think not that I wander from the legitimate objects of our organization in striking the civic note at this hour: our expressed aim is "the scientific study and teaching of the modern languages

and literatures in the Central States," but the first condition of scientific activity is to secure an environment in which that activity can have its most perfect play: the one great, common foe of our whole profession is Mammon, stifling ruthlessly the poetic impulses in the hearts of generation after generation of American youth. There is only *one* theme for those who stand for the higher life of the spirit, and that is to sound the note of unfailing courage and serene work in the midst of the self-sufficiency and self-complacency of those who look at all this higher life with skepticism. Our aim is to work for Distinction in public, as well as scholastic affairs, and to bring about conditions in which America's choicest minds shall have some more direct and fruitful scope for their activities than the reading of Phi Beta Kappa orations and commencement addresses,—to wit, the direct service of our beloved country in its every-day concerns and interests, from which they are now so largely shut out by the assertive political boss,—our American *Übermensch.*

The practical man would hardly conceal his amusement at the assumption of a company of mere philologists that they were identified with the true progress of the community, and were the custodians of its higher fortunes; he would see some vanity in this belief, and yet we cherish it, not because of any personal attainment of perfection, but because of our attitude of homage toward an attainable ideal of perfection. It is this feeling that emboldens us in appropriating the encouragement of those recent words of President Roosevelt:

. . . "in this world the one thing supremely worth having is the opportunity, coupled with the capacity, to do well and worthily a piece of work the doing of which is of vital consequence to the welfare of mankind."

It is therefore worth much to us, scattered, isolated, and almost swallowed up in the great ocean of American commercialism, that we should now and then come together and refresh our faith in the value of our mission, that of carefully and faithfully keeping alive the tender plant of pure human-

ism. It is fully profitable to meet, now and then, were it only to encourage us as guardians of that fair and serene domain, whose interests are all those most sacred ideals which our better humanity loves and cherishes:

> largior hic campos aether et lumine vestit
> purpureo, solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.

If you are at all unsettled in the assurance that we scholars are the simon-pure, chosen aristocracy of this country at the present time, that our calling claims justly the place which Burke allowed to feudal chivalry, "the unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise," I can only assure you that the Hon. Richard Olney, whose sound practical sense cannot be gainsaid, says so, and that it must be so. The only pity is, in practice, that our fellow-men do not seem to have generally found it out! A rare gift, costly preparation, unremitting devotion,—and for this something less than the pay of a book-keeper or a football-coach,—and all that endless succession of what the unhappy Bürger called "*die verdammten Finanz Affären.*" Still more trying is the complacent attitude of the contented Philistine toward the scholar, as though the latter were not more than a half-man, and by no means to be taken seriously; the utter non-appreciation of a large amount of unpaid, highly special service, given as a charity to the public—these things possess a certain ironical interest as showing a confusion of material and moral values, especially when we remember that the latter are the only values at all,—but no one who has the great honor of being called to so high a service can concern himself much about material grievances: after all these things do the Gentiles seek; they are wholly uninteresting in comparison with the business that he must be about.

On the other hand, it is altogether profitable that in the secret places of our own souls we should make inquiry whether we are not somewhat responsible for the isolation of

our class from the respect and sympathy of the public; whether there be not in college circles something of that mediæval presumption of sacrosanct privileges and exemptions which should release us from the serious, homely duties which are the birthright of all honest men; whether there be not some survival of Pharisaical superiority to the rank and file of our brothers in the democracy. Is it possible that the seductive charms of the older, riper, mellower civilizations, which it has been our duty to know intimately, have made us forget the admonition: "Sparta is thine allotted home; make *her* a home of order and beauty!" Can it be that any of us have left our hearts among the aliens, and have lost interest in our own inheritance? May there still be a note of warning in Milton's complaint against the "Monsieurs of Paris" in his day, who took England's "hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies" only to "send them over back again transformed into mimicks, apes and kicshoes." In American social life, is it not sometimes true that when our masters go into the house of Rimmon to worship there, *we* bow down ourselves in the house of Rimmon, also? Our group is one of the utmost importance to American life—so long as we refrain from exalting it into a caste—but even certain phases of its importance can be exaggerated: the man who holds that his investigations of the back-gutturals in Old Frisian ought to exempt him from his human duties to his neighbors and to his country, lacks that saving sense of proportion, which is, being interpreted, the sense of humor and the sense of beauty. Let us not be too exalted over highly-trained mental acuteness: "It is but for heaven to give a turn to one of my nerves," wrote the divine Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, "and I should be an ideot." There is danger of laying too little stress upon the more virile virtues, for the lack of which "no amount of refinement and learning, of gentleness and culture, can possibly atone." Perhaps even Mammon may show some redeeming qualities, when we have made him a friend to ourselves. In our pursuit of scholastic idealism, let

us not be unwarned by the immovable, unkempt, impossible *Yogi* of India, sitting in rapt contemplation under his banyan-tree, nor untaught by the lessons of the civil service of China, whose scholarly office-holders are weak, corrupt, and unprogressive. Extreme specialization, the crowning glory of a broad, liberal education, has made unjustifiable inroads into the symmetry of humane culture, whereby we modern-language teachers are not altogether guiltless. Speaking generally, ours is a collegiate association: to us are committed, during four most important years of development, those who are the pledges of the highest welfare of the State. If more nobility is to enter into American public life, if the sordid squalor of materialism is to yield to the benign supremacy of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, no moment must be wasted in striking those heroic strings. We stand (if anybody) for specialism —but for specialism upon a broad basis of culture. Our teaching of "Joynes-Meissner" and "The Flight of a Tartar Tribe" must be shot through with a "philosophy" which may fitly serve as "the guide of life." The deplorable decline of Hellenic studies has given to us a larger influence in the life and policy of American colleges. Some of us may envy classical teachers the essentially more elevated values with which it is their privilege to deal; we may feel that ours is, in its nature, a somewhat humbler task, but we cannot evade the responsibility of shaping "that complete and generous Education . . . which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war." Overhearing some of the interested discussions of the members of our craft, you shall be at times struck by the fact that the note of universality is so largely wanting; our "custodies" are verily "slight and prodigal." Our guild is looked upon as though it existed for its own sake, as though its interests, of themselves, were an end of organization and of combined effort. I should be the last person to decry any legitimate zeal for the unlimited betterment of our estate and its products, but he who seeks the detached welfare

of any minority in the American state misses the first principles which underlie the true glory of that commonwealth.

The Modern Language Association of America, like every working organism, has relations in both directions, up and down. "*Es giebt ein Oben und ein Unten,*" here as elsewhere, with subordination, on the one hand, to something higher, with authority, on the other hand, over that which is below. There is no such thing as absolute freedom and independence, even for an academic union—such an organization, if any, has surely a sufficiently adult apprehension to recognize the eternal relativity of things, to be aware that a detached member is consigned to a certain and speedy death. The organization of the United States navy impresses one as being the nearest reflection of the universal cosmos which has been achieved: the common sailor is responsible to the gunner's mate, the latter to the cadet, he to the officer of the deck, this one to the executive officer, who reports to the captain, who receives his orders from the admiral, who is subject to the authority of the Secretary of the Navy, under the command of the President of the United States, who is himself responsible to the common people, and thus the life of the organism keeps coursing in a healthy circuit, always strong and instantly efficient, ever renewed, nowhere congested, never stationary, always in wholesome pulsation, and with a progressive career open for talents.

I hold, then, that our first duty and highest function, even as an organization of linguistic specialists, is in relation to the total life of the commonwealth, is political, and that this deep note should be the first sounded at every political gathering: we must place enlightened, trained intellect at the direct service of the State, as the only solvent of the problems of municipal misgovernment, corporate greed, and the tyranny of manual labor; we must lead our pupils and our neighbors directly into the field of practical, local politics—we must respond to the call which has lately been sounded by Mr. Justice Brown of the United States Supreme Court, who reminds us that

"there never has been a time in the history of the country when men of independent thought—men who can neither be awed by the mastery of wealth nor seduced by the blandishments of popularity, were more urgently needed." How long must we all submit to the enormous waste of the resources of our rich and prosperous country, by allowing them to be squandered by men who have no standard except that keen thirst for elaborate luxury which is barbarizing American taste and ethics? Come, brothers, let us get *our* hands upon these resources, and expend them by right of that fitness which comes—not with the possession of money—but to men who have gained humane culture by long and special training. Give the scholarly element a chance, and American life would regain the color and joyousness and dignity of which it is now too often defrauded—and our land would blossom as the rose.

Having disposed of this important preliminary, it is now hardly necessary to remind you that humanity can take advantage of the treasures of knowledge only if they be kept classified and available, and that the sum-total in every field is now too large to be compassed by any individual mind. There are close analogies between good academic co-operation and good housekeeping: it is a poorly equipped home which must send for an artisan every time a screw needs tightening, and hardly better off is that household whose attic is an indistinguishable medley of unassorted odds and ends. Good housekeeping provides liberal stores against all usual emergencies,—and keeps them in such order that they can be found at once, when needed. I am reminded of one family which kept a certain short piece of brass wire unused for eight years, but it proved to be worth far more than its weight in gold at one particular emergency, because it was instantly available. So with the conservation of knowledge, the "Restitution of Decayed Intelligence." Society must foster the acquisitions of many students, in order to be prepared for all contingencies. A trustworthy dictionary must

contain a large majority of words which you shall never look up, but an abridged dictionary is an abomination, for it is sure to fail you in your worst extremity. Therefore we cannot applaud the economics of that member of a western legislature who opposed a further appropriation to the library of the State University, on the ground that few, if any, of the professors had yet read through all the books which had already been provided them. It is only the sum-total of knowledge possessed by an academic body which will approach that completeness which scientific progress must demand. Such a body is always in danger of self-conceit, of fossilization, of excessive regard for the past,—and yet it cannot be dispensed with. It alone is capable of taking account of the stock of the whole science, recasting its values, and eliminating that "ancient good" which time has made "uncouth." Such work as that associated with the names of Karl Goedeke and William Frederick Poole, and especially the splendid co-operative fruits of the labor of our own Committee of Twelve, under the able direction of Professor Calvin Thomas, seem to be among the most legitimate and sacred trusts committed to our charge—and they should be repeated at such intervals as are necessary to bring our science into the possession of the best and latest results of fruitful investigation.

As average members of the profession of Modern Languages it is our duty to put ourselves and our work into a vital relation to the greatest masters of our science, to get the benefit of their immense central power and warmth. We should lay siege to them, if necessary, until they consent to impart directly to us the immediate advantages of their vital and glowing activity. Such men are, perhaps, hard to find among the present generation of teachers, but I mean precisely that which William Dwight Whitney was to the American Oriental Society, what Professor Gildersleeve has been to the Philological Society of Johns Hopkins University. The most hopeful thing in the matter is, that men of this stamp can be interested in such a cause, and are now unwilling to surrender

themselves for the benefit of those who are less favorably endowed: but it must be on the basis of homage to the Masters—there is no room for the policy of "share and share alike" in this thing. Let that pseudo-democratic principle keep its place in ward-primaries, where it belongs. During twenty-one years William Dwight Whitney, the prince of modern philologians, that great, simple, humble, valiant man, was absent but twice from the sessions of the American Oriental Society, for twenty-seven years he served as its corresponding secretary, for eighteen years as its librarian, and for six years as its president. Half the contents of its Journal came from his pen: to the first sixteen volumes of the Proceedings of the American Philological Association he contributed fourteen extensive papers. It is in regal men of his type that the phrase *noblesse oblige* becomes concrete truth. One of our first aims is to capture such men, wherever they are to be found. Colossal talents are naturally (though not always) drawn to the most powerful institutions; nothing would sooner pervert the ends of our society than a spirit of local jealousy or self-interest which would prevent our recognizing the supreme place of supreme endowments in the association. It seems not unlikely that the most favored institution might, in the course of things, become a center of overshadowing influence: if this be done legitimately, and by natural gravitation, so be it; for my part I should prefer that our whole Modern Language organization should cast itself forthright upon the ample bosom of such a dominating institution than that it should ever be controlled by a spirit of mediocrity. Probably there are other ways of avoiding this calamity, but let me warn you that the moment we cease to select and honor the highest talent in our profession, that very moment the scepter of supreme influence and control in the field of modern language studies will pass from us to some individual institution which has the wisdom to discrimate in scholastic values.

Another power which is set above us is that of the trustees

of our several colleges, men whom the public has chosen to bear the responsibility, and, ultimately, to direct the important policy of these institutions. I once gave deep offence to certain of my colleagues by a publication in which the professors in a college were spoken of as "employees" of the trustees: well, they pay us a stipulated sum for our services,—in my own case a pretty high return for value received—and we are never reluctant to accept their check at the beginning of the month. Employee no longer means a servant whose thoughts and actions are subject to arbitrary dictation. The distinguished Ferdinand Hasslar was once brought from Switzerland to Washington to assume charge of the United States Coast Survey. A committee of Congress waited upon him in his office to inspect his work. "You come to 'spect my vork, eh?" he screamed, "Vat you know 'bout my vork? Vat you going to 'spect? You knows notting at all 'bout my vork. How can you 'spect my vork, ven you knows notting? Get out of here; you in my vay. Congress be von big vool to send you to 'spect my vork. I 'ave no time to vaste vith such as knows notting vat I am 'bout. Go back to Congress and tell dem vat I say!"—and Congress had enough of broad American good-humor to laugh at these remarks and to vote Hasslar increased resources. However, we should see an end to all orderly administration if there were two ultimate sources of authority; the ideal is one of cheerful association—the specialist being called in to aid the responsible superior in the wisest use of the resources to be expended, and being of great assistance in bearing that responsibility.

Reports have been published of a proposed National University to be established in Washington. While these reports are too insufficient to afford a view of its proposed scope, it is certain that, should it contemplate the furtherance of the modern languages, our Council should exercise large influence in determining the policy and advising in the appointments which would give such an institution ranking authority in the

United States. As a national body, our association ought to take precedence over any individual institution or group of colleges in exercising influence upon any national enterprise, and I recommend that our Council be instructed to communicate with the Council of the parent body with a view to offering our united official assistance and advice to the trustees of the new institution in the matter of modern language studies.

An important practical duty of our Council should be to maintain the dignity of the profession in case of any arbitrary or tyrannical treatment of its members on the part of power in any form. In this country men who stand for any inflexible standard of truth or conduct are more liable than elsewhere to be put under almost intolerable pressure to yield for the gratification of powerful persons who are accustomed to have their own way because it is their own way, or still more often, for the same reason, to surrender to the bold demands of King Demos. Every sentinel on the firing line of scientific advance should know that he has at his back the whole host of soldiers of the truth, who are ready to rush at he first signal to his rescue, not withholding the full supportt of lives, of fortunes, and of sacred honor. It should be the security of such men to know that there is one incorruptible source of honor and vindication, of practical relief and assistance, and our Council has no more obvious function—none which we should more liberally uphold—than that of making a full investigation and report upon complaints which might involve the dignity or honor of our humblest members.

Another field which merits our attention is that of the publishing houses, and their vital relations to the fountain-head of American scholarship and American taste. Some of them are altogether too rich to be counted quite respectable, and invite a looking-into their methods. If by the use of licentious and arbitrary methods they fail in a most sacred trust to American society; if they foist upon our youth the cheap productions of cheap individuals; if they refuse publication

to works of which our science stands in great need, simply because such works cannot be marketed to ten thousand secondary schools,—we, who are alone authorized to pronounce ultimate and authoritative judgment upon these matters, ought to be heard from, with no uncertain sound. There are even very nasty rumors heard of certain octopus-methods of absorbing educational values—of bribery, oppression, and other such unspeakable villainies which the morals of the market-place tolerate:—we representative scholars are meanly recreant to the spirit which made America great and honored among the nations of the earth, if we count our leisure or our resources dear in organizing an effective, quick-hitting opposition to such tyranny: "*die zeit des schweygens ist vorgangen, vnd die zeit zureden ist kommen.*"

It had been my intention to discuss in some detail our aims in reference to those members of the social and educational organization which stand in a secondary relation to ourselves, but it occurs to me that this is, after all, hardly necessary. The secondary matters will usually take care of themselves: if with undivided heart we seek first the Kingdom and Its Righteousness, we may rest in the confident assurance that All These Things shall be Added unto us. Granted that we are unswervingly true to the Commonwealth and to the highest traditions of our noble science,—then all sincere workers in this field will turn naturally to usward,

> As for the Water-Brooks the Hart
> In Thirst doth Pant and Bray.

High ideals always filter downwards (more rapidly and effectively in America than anywhere else); otherwise I should be tempted to point out the need of quickening and deepening the work of our preparatory schools, and raising it above the plane of day-labor in which it is sometimes treated. In thinking of this work, one cannot help pensively contrasting, for instance, the gatherings of that group of supporters of Herrig's "*Archiv*" at their Socratic ban-

quets in the Lokal across the Spree, or the band which maintains the "*Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht.*" Would that the gardens which our secondary teachers cultivate might have their irrigating-channels watered by some flow from that deep, abundant stream whose name is the Modern Language Association of America—in other words, that we might secure more of these teachers as eager readers and valuable contributors for our *Notes* and *Publications*. I should think that they, themselves, would rather be in vital communion with our truly catholic, apostolic institution, than with any more local, sectarian conventicle. It is unfortunately symptomatic that only one of the twenty-eight papers to be presented at this meeting comes from a teacher in a secondary school—a fact which argues some serious fault, not so much in the secondary school teachers as in the efforts of our Association. What influence are we exerting toward the appointment of the very best-prepared and most gifted teachers? How often it happens that it is just these who are unable even to exhibit their ability, and who become discouraged and lost to the commonwealth! Nothing ever wrings my heart more than such letters as the following, which I received from a mother who lives in an obscure community of Illinois:

"I want to write you concerning my daughter; she has as yet no position; . . . without any help she feels she will be obliged to take up something else, and short-hand seems to be all that is left, the one thing I dislike so much to have her do or make her profession. . . . When I see her many German books, and know too that she loves them so, and realize her inability to use them, I feel so sorry for her, and can easily understand why she is so disappointed, for I do perceive it more and more every day. Her wish to teach German was the one thing she put many long hours on, and looked forward to the time when she might perfect it as a language, should she be able to make the means to do the same.

"My daughter does not know that I have written to you, for I am sure she would not want to bother anyone with her misfortune, but knowing that she regards you as a dear friend, I felt prompted to write you concerning the matter."

I do not mean to say that the State of Illinois suffers vital injury because some of its daughters follow stenography

instead of teaching German—quite the contrary—but knowing as I do the unusual linguistic and pedagogic gifts of that individual, when I think back upon her faultless devotion and conscientiousness during a long, special training, I am as certain as anyone can be of anything that she is unjustly barred from what she has honestly earned, for which she has paid far more than the fair value. It does not help to cry "overproduction" and "learned proletariat;" all this falls to the ground when I see the cases of inferior pupils of my own who have been appointed to remunerative and responsible positions without apprenticeship, and without any consultation of myself, who have tested them at every practical point during a series of years. So far from there being an excess of really qualified teachers, there is a crying demand for them; we all know how small a percentage is found of those students upon whom Providence has set the unmistakable seal of this high calling: "Many wear the robe, but few keep the Way." We know that these things are controlled by Rings,—conscienceless, deaf, irresponsible,—throttling the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness at its most vital point; and the most disheartening thing about it is, that our very institutions of higher learning themselves, whose cornerstone is truth and honor, are not guiltless of such abuse of scholastic trusts for "Policy." Unless you subordinate the interests of your own institution to the promotion of sound scholarship, after the fullest, fairest, and most open canvass for the best teacher for any particular place, you are a companion to Croker, and a brother to Bill Tweed. I know of one striking recent case in an influential college where a notoriously inferior man was appointed, while even the mere opportunity to present the case of a better man was refused. There is a general lack of confidence in the ability and authority of the professional Employment Bureaus—is it not the first demand of justice that *we* should take this matter in hand? What could possibly elevate the standing of our profession throughout the Central States so much as an

impartial, inter-collegiate Employment Bureau, conducted by our own best representatives, who should candidly seek the survival of the fittest, in place of the present disorderly scramble for existence? I hope for the day when no high-school teacher,—still less college professor,—shall be appointed without the case being fairly passed upon by our Executive Committee. You may think me somewhat innocent and confident; that I am absurdly untaught in the gentle science of seeing through the secret designs of other people, and circumventing them;—that shall not embarrass the message: "*ma fonction est de dire la vérité, mais non pas de la faire croire,*"—even though results may seem to be postponed until the time of the Greek Kalends, or, let us say, until Mr. Howells shall become a Romanticist. I have faith to believe that enlightened people should be able to reason together to a working agreement, and to stick to that agreement when reached, and I hold that nothing is, in the long run, so practicable as simple justice and the Golden Rule. Be these details treated as they may, one counsel stands sure: if we keep our highest standards as an Association absolutely pure, never swaying them to policy or favor, we shall deserve, and at length gain, all the power necessary for accomplishing whatever reforms are needed.

On behalf of the Association I welcome all its members and friends to this beautiful center of education and higher citizenship, which so cordially gives us its choice hospitality, and we all look for great benefit and inspiration from our meeting. Some are necessarily absent, who are in full sympathy with us, and engaged in the same work. From the Governor of Illinois I have received a courteous word of greeting, with regrets that he is prevented by other duties from being with us at this hour; Professor Smith of the Louisiana State University, our former efficient president, sends his "good wishes for the best of all meetings." "I shall be in Franklin, Louisiana," he writes, "attending our State Teachers' Association, but in spirit I shall be with

you and your goodly knights, the members of the Modern Language Association."

May I be allowed one or two practical suggestions, prompted by the memories of similar meetings? The morning sessions have been set at the not inconvenient hour of nine, and every minute of time will be needed to attend to the business and the contributions before the Association. It is not at all strange that there is usually some difficulty in assembling the members promptly: one of the best things in our meetings is the opportunity to spend unbroken nights with our rarely-seen colleagues, to indulge in long, heart-filling talks among ourselves after our year of exile among the alien hosts of Philisitia, and yet—so far as this involves impairing the movement of the programme, there is room for self-denial in being promptly on hand the next morning. It will be the aim of the chair to call the sessions to order precisely at the minute indicated upon the committee's schedule, in order that no injustice may be done to those who have kindly brought to us the fruits of their extended labors. The reading of papers always offers room for the exercise of reciprocal comity,—the case being less serious than in the Oriental Society, for instance, where the same members must listen to the discussion of both Indo-European and Semitic papers, on the principle, "*Eine Hand wäscht die andere.*" With the crowded programme before us, there is especial reason for heeding the admonition of our country's greatest scholar as President of the American Philological Society: "We shall need to consult brevity and point in papers and discussions, repressing the national disposition to too much talk (sometimes wrongly attributed to the over-pursuit, instead of the under-pursuit of philology), and frowning particularly on papers which undertake to grapple with subjects for which a volume would be insufficient, and which involve a host of debatable points. The character of the audience we address must be borne in mind, and popular and elementary explanation cut short."

As a matter of courtesy, the chair trusts that no paper may exceed some definite limit in length (except by special request of the Association), and he would welcome a rule which should set such a reasonable limit, recalling also the tribute of Professor Lanman to the same great scholar, Whitney: "How notable the brevity with which he presented his papers! No labored reading from a manuscript, but rather a simple and facile account of results. An example, surely! He who had the most to say used in proportion the least time in saying it."

JAMES TAFT HATFIELD.